

Launceston Medical Centre Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Minutes of the Meeting, 19 January, 2017, at Launceston Medical Centre

1. Chairman's welcome and introductions

Chairman Maureen Amy welcomed Pam Davey, Dawn Rogers, Cym Downing, Steve Dymond, Patty Taylor, Les Whaley and Peter Harper.

2. Apologies

There were apologies from Helen Ward, Nik Burgess and Andy Yardley.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from 3 November, 2016, were unanimously agreed.

4. Update on medical centre expansion plans and other relevant medical centre matters

Peter said that although planning permission had been granted for the extension to the medical centre, the centre was still in negotiations with NHS England concerning the building and NHS Kernow Property Services concerning the land.

Building

The medical centre had received an email from NHS Kernow, on behalf of NHS England, requesting an extremely detailed proposal for the expansion of the medical centre. It would be the ninth time that the medical centre had had to supply this information, each time in a slightly different format and this time requiring additional information relating to the particular circumstances in Launceston – for those who were unaware of what has happened to date. The email was received on a Wednesday – the information required on Friday, two days later. The meeting to consider the submission will be held on February ??.

Land

NHS Kernow has appointed a firm of consultants to conclude negotiations for the land. The discussions are on-going and relate to the actual conditions on which the contract for sale is based, for instance, possible sale of the buildings in future or additional expansion on the site.

Staff changes at the Medical Centre

Peter said the days that paramedic Marcus worked at the medical centre had increased from two to four and that another paramedic, Gary, had joined the team and was working two days a week.

Another nurse at the centre was going through a prescribing course so she would be able to join Carol, Pete and Chris as prescribing nurses.

Two receptionists had left the centre recently and interviews were taking place. One of the receptionists had said that she found the rudeness of some patients – both on the phone and at the desk – very hard to cope with.

The practise was still recruiting for doctors and currently a medical student was working at the medical centre for six weeks.

IT update

The medical centre was expanding the system of sending text reminders to patients about appointments. The number of patients failing to keep appointments remained about the same.

5. Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly – discussion on feedback from the Umbrella Group and the Launceston Community Network Panel. Do we, as representatives of one of the largest medical practices in Cornwall want to comment on the STP?

Members discussed the consultation document on the STP and the general feeling was that the document was a 'wish list' with general aims but very little substance. However, the group did feel strongly that one proposal should not be pursued: that some community hospitals should be closed with the possibility of community 'hubs' being created in certain locations.

The group said Launceston Hospital provided important services for the town and surrounding area.

Reference was made to the wards for people discharged from the major hospitals but who were not yet fit enough to return home.

Rosemary said that the minor injuries unit provided a first class service and was open in the evenings. Dawn said that the reason that people did not use the local services was because they just did not know what was available locally. She said that promotion of the services at community hospitals should be a priority.

The group agreed and there was general discussion about confusion over opening hours of the minor injuries unit and services available at the hospital.

The secretary was instructed to respond to the STP survey on behalf of the patient group saying that community hospitals should be retained and significant promotion of the services they provided should be a priority. *(See note at end of minutes.)*

6. Outstanding item(s) from previous meetings: Invitation to chairman of the Cornwall NHS Foundation Trust, Dr Barbara Vann, to talk to the PPG and medical centre staff about the work of the Trust. Date to be agreed.

As our March meeting will be the AGM, it was agreed that the chairman should invite Dr Vann to our May meeting.

7. AOB

Bouquets

Les said he had observed what a good job paramedic Marcus was doing and Steve said that Dr Reid had done an outstanding job on sorting out a patient's long-standing health problem with a major hospital.

Prescriptions

Peter explained that patients could not order prescriptions by phone because it was essential that the actual medicaments required be written down by the person requesting them so there would be no mistakes.

Rosemary suggested that the information screen in the waiting room be moved because it was not in a position where people could see it easily.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting – the AGM – will be held at the **Medical Centre on Thursday, March 23, at 6pm** and the next meeting will be on May 11.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Note: *This is the response on behalf of our patient group to the STP (see agenda item 5):*

Q4 To what extent do you agree with our recommended approach and our community care priorities?

Launceston Medical Centre Patient Participation Group feels most strongly that community hospitals should be retained. We are not being sentimental about “our” hospital. We believe that there is a vital role for Launceston, and the other community hospitals, to play in providing an effective and cost-effective health service.

It is said that services at community hospitals are under-used. There is a simple reason for that; it is not because people don't want them; it's because people don't know about them.

A straw poll among members revealed that most had no idea that the minor injuries unit at Launceston Hospital is open 7-days a week and that it is open until 8pm – and that's among a group who have an interest in local medical facilities. As far as the wider public is concerned, many probably don't realise that there is a minor injuries unit at the hospital, and there have been so many changes to the NHS in recent years that it's likely that some people are unaware that Launceston Hospital is still in service. The same is probably true for other community hospitals in the county.

There is constantly information in the media about the pressure on the A&E services and talk of better use of GPs (who are already under severe pressure) but what is done to promote the services available at community hospitals; particularly in terms of minor injuries? The minor injuries units are in a position to prevent many people from going straight to the major A&E departments.

To relieve the huge pressure on our major hospitals – both in terms of providing community bed-spaces for recovering patients and in providing non-emergency services and minor injury treatment – our PPG believes that the facilities at existing community hospitals should be fully utilised and that significant promotion of the local services should be made a priority.